

For immediate release
April 28, 2006

RIO GRANDE DROUGHT CONDITIONS, WATER DATABASE, AND RIVER PARK ON AGENDA FOR MAY 11 PUBLIC MEETING IN LAS CRUCES

This year's low Rio Grande water supply will be discussed at the next meeting of the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC). The meeting will take place May 11, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. at the New Mexico State University Senate Chamber located on Level 3 of the Corbett Center in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Hydraulic Engineer Wayne Treers of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will discuss this year's water supply and the proposed operations of Elephant Butte and Caballo Reservoirs under the 2006 Rio Grande Project Annual Operating Plan. The 2006 spring runoff is forecast to be extremely low in the upper Rio Grande Basin. The region is in the eleventh year of a severe drought and Elephant Butte Reservoir is projected to be at only 55,000 acre-feet total storage by early September – its lowest level in 35 years. Reclamation projects that the Rio Grande Project water users will only be allocated about 54% of a full supply for irrigation this year. The Rio Grande Project provides water to users in southern New Mexico; El Paso, Texas; and Mexico.

In other business, researchers Dr. Christopher Brown of the New Mexico State University Geography Department and Dr. Zhuping Sheng with the Texas A & M University, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station in El Paso will present an overview of the Paso del Norte Watershed Council (PDNWC) Coordinated Water Resource Database and GIS Project, details of progress to date, and a draft survey to better learn the needs of potential users and to compile additional water resources data. The PDNWC has been funded for the last three years by the El Paso Water Utilities, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to develop a coordinated facility to promote the sharing of water resource data and related geo-

spatial information and geographic information system capability. The PDNWC Coordinated Water Resource Database and GIS Project has been successful in providing via the Internet a range of water resource and GIS data for the area served by the Rio Grande Project. Interested parties and stakeholders are encouraged to attend the meeting to learn more about the project and provide input for the user needs survey.

The Citizens' Forum will also hear an update about New Mexico's newest state park, the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, located along the west bank of the Rio Grande near the town of Mesilla. Park Superintendent Stan Ellis will give an overview of the park's history, describe what is presently going on at the park site, and discuss future plans. The park is currently in the construction phase and is scheduled to open in spring 2007.

The Rio Grande Citizens' Forum was established by the USIBWC in 1999 to facilitate the exchange of information regarding Commission activities on the Rio Grande between Percha Dam, New Mexico and Fort Quitman, Texas. It is designed to bring together community members, enabling the early and continued two-way flow of information, concerns, values, and needs between USIBWC and the general public, environmentalists, irrigation districts, municipalities, and others interested in the river. Members of the Rio Grande Citizens' Forum Board, who serve as unpaid volunteers, represent a variety of interests along the Rio Grande in west Texas and southern New Mexico.

The meeting agenda appears below. Members of the public can obtain more information from Public Affairs Assistant Selma Rivera at 915-832-4706, selmarivera@ibwc.state.gov.

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RIO GRANDE CITIZENS' FORUM
Thursday, May 11, 2006
6:30 - 8:30 P.M.
Senate Chamber, Corbett Center, Level 3
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, NM

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions - Michael Fahy, Citizens' Forum Co-Chair
- Update on New Mexico's Newest State Park, the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park - Stan Ellis, Park Superintendent
- 2006 Rio Grande Project Annual Operating Plan - Wayne Treers, Hydraulic Engineer, Bureau of Reclamation
- Project Update and Release of Draft Survey for the Paso del Norte Watershed Council Coordinated Database and GIS Project - Dr. Christopher Brown, NMSU Dept. of Geography, and Dr. Zhuping Sheng, Texas A & M University, Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, El Paso
- Public Comment
- Board Discussion, Suggested Future Agenda Items

If you have a disability that you wish to self-identify confidentially that requires accommodation, please advise us ahead of time. For more information, call 915-832-4706 or e-mail selmarivera@ibwc.state.gov.